

FDD-PST

From: Nila Maxwell [n_maxwell@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2000 2:11 PM
To: fdd-pst@fns.usda.gov
Subject: Food Distribution 2000

letter USDA
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Grady Co. School Nutrition Program

April 27, 2000

FD2000 Project Coordinator
Food Distribution Division – FNS
3101 Park Center Drive
Ford Avenue Bldg. – Room 601
Alexandria, VA 22302

Dear Coordinator,

It was brought to my attention that there is a proposal to change the USDA Food Distribution process for the School Nutrition Program. Some of these changes are excellent ideas that could easily be applied to the Federal Distribution Program (FDP) in its existing form to improve the program. However, some of the changes will result in increased food cost for the school cafeterias.

I have worked with the Georgia School Nutrition Program in an administrative level with a school system since 1987. I have seen many improvements in the Georgia USDA program during this time. The directors and the State staff have worked together with the USDA office in Georgia to develop a program that allows us to utilize commodities in a way that both benefit the farmer and the school children of Georgia.

From what I have heard and read, it seems that the changes proposed by USDA are an attempt to address the complaints of a minority of School Foodservice Authorities that have not been able to develop a successful program. The level and extent of communication with SFAs to develop an understanding of the effect of price support, surplus removal, and market conditions on the purchase availability and timing of food deliveries and to obtain SFA food preferences varies from state to state. Varying philosophies and methods of operation from state to state affect program success. It seems it would be beneficial to evaluate the successful state programs in order to develop a national program.

I do not understand why programs that work will be destroyed because of a few that cannot get their act together.

April 27, 2000

Page 2

I could write pages on the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. However, I believe that the Georgia School and Community Nutrition staff understand the program better than anyone because we have a program that works well for us. They have already submitted their concerns to you about how they feel that there should be changes but not as drastic as the current proposal. You need to listen to more state SFA representatives, not just a few that have had unsuccessful programs.

With the current proposed changes, many farmers and children will suffer if you do not take the time to think the matter through.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nila Maxwell".

Nila Maxwell
Director

Xc: Michael Hickerson, Superintendent